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Letter dated 14 January 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 13 January 2001 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, conveying Iraq's request for an inquiry into the use of depleted uranium by the United States and the United Kingdom in their 1991 aggression against Iraq. This has been a direct cause of injury to hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians, especially children and women, and of the appearance of unusual pathological conditions of which Iraq had no experience prior to the aggression.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed **Al-Humaimidi**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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I refer to our letters dated 5 October 1994 (S/1994/1131), 26 May 1998 (S/1998/430, annex) and 1 July 1998 (S/1998/601, annex) addressed to you on the subject of the suffering inflicted on the Iraqi people by the use of munitions containing depleted uranium by United States and British forces during the aggression against Iraq of January 1991, the serious impact on health of exposure to this radioactive metal and the hundreds of thousands of casualties, especially children and women, that such exposure has caused. Today, world media and policy circles are once again exposing the use of depleted-uranium munitions by the United States armed forces, this time in their war of aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999. Reports indicate that, because of their use, many members of the forces that participated in this war have died of or have contracted cancerous diseases as a result of exposure to depleted-uranium radiation.

Since the 1991 "Anglo-Saxon" aggression against Iraq ended, many of the world's medical and scientific authorities have warned of the grave consequences of the use of depleted-uranium munitions against Iraq, and those consequences promptly emerged in the form of unusual pathological conditions of which Iraq had had no experience prior to the war. Seventy-five per cent of cases involved children, who began to suffer increasingly from leukaemia and congenital and genetic deformities, and lung, digestive-tract, blood and skin cancers became increasingly widespread. The primary cause of all of these types of cancer is exposure to radiation.

Admissions made by many United States and British officials have confirmed that depleted-uranium munitions were used against Iraq, as was also demonstrated in the communications indicated above.

On the basis of the foregoing and given all of these facts, the Government of the Republic of Iraq urges you to order a prompt inquiry, to be conducted by reliable medical and scientific authorities in cooperation with the relevant Iraqi scientific bodies, into the use of depleted uranium against Iraq and to expose such use as a direct cause of injury to hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians and of damage to all aspects of the environment.

I look forward to your prompt and positive response, as required by your legal and moral responsibilities, to Iraq's concerns and to its call for facts to be brought to light that will undoubtedly lead to the condemnation of the inhuman and immoral practices of the United States and the United Kingdom against Iraq.

(*Signed*) Mohammed Said **Al-Sahaf**
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq